

8-28-2002

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Recommended Citation

University of Dayton, "'Just-War' Doctrine Rules Out American Offensive Against Saddam Hussein, Say Experts" (2002). *News Releases*. 9997.

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Aug. 28, 2002
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NEWS RELEASE

'JUST-WAR' DOCTRINE RULES OUT AMERICAN OFFENSIVE AGAINST SADDAM HUSSEIN, SAY EXPERTS

DAYTON, Ohio — Of the seven precepts set forth by the Catholic tradition that define when war is "just," the current global political and military situation meets none, say University of Dayton experts.

As President George W. Bush weighs the option of a pre-emptive strike in Iraq to oust Saddam Hussein for developing weapons of mass destruction, UD philosophers and theologians point to Catholic social teaching as a model to be followed. Since the World War II-era papacy of Pius XII, the centerpiece on the issue of war has been to strengthen international organizations to seek alternatives to armed conflict.

"I cannot see how an invasion can be justified," said Terrence W. Tilley, professor of religious studies and author of *Inventing Catholic Tradition* (Orbis Books, 2000), which won the Catholic Press Association 2001 Book Award for first place in theology. "It is clearly disproportionate in its response and hardly a last resort. That there could be a just cause, the protection of the innocent, is also truly dubious."

The just-war tradition, as set forth in *The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace* by the U.S. Catholic Conference, calls for lethal force only when the cause is just, the injustice suffered by one party significantly outweighs that suffered by the other, the authority to use lethal force is legitimate, the action is undertaken with right intention, there is a probability of success, the proportion of overall destruction is outweighed by the good to be achieved and it's a last resort.

The statement can be found at www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/justwar.htm.

"Almost any of the criteria traditionally associated with just-war doctrine would overturn the Bush administration's arguments for this new offensive against Iraq, or more precisely, Saddam Hussein," said Sandra Yocum Mize, associate professor of religious studies who specializes in American Catholicism. "One need only consider the criteria of reasonable hope of success coupled with proportionality. Can we justify inflicting further sufferings on the Iraqi people in the hopes of toppling a regime that has proven enormously successful in

ensuring its own survival no matter the cost to its citizens?

A U.S. war on Iraq could ignite other conflicts in a region already stretched to the breaking point, she said. "Those who would suffer the most are the noncombatants, many already suffering from long-standing conflicts. Finally and perhaps most fundamentally, one has to completely evacuate the meaning of a defense against aggression in this case. The prospect of allowing the U.S. to justify a first strike against a possible aggressor is quite frankly frightening. Such an argument could justify almost any act of aggression, not only by the most powerful nation in the world but also by those who seek to check that power," Mize said.

"There is no just cause," echoed Joseph C. Kunkel, professor emeritus of philosophy who teaches ethics and modern war courses. "Iraq has done nothing to any other nation to warrant reprisals. Unlike 1990 Iraq has not invaded Kuwait. Nor have any Iraqis been involved in Sept. 11 activities. The argument about developing weapons of mass destruction is trumped up. No evidence supporting such an argument has been put forth by the present administration. There is no good intention or last resort.

"And proportionality and discrimination will also be violated as the war will come on top of an immoral 12-year run on economic sanctions that have killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians. President George W. Bush is simply using his super 'power' status, not high morality in going after Iraq at this time," Kunkel said.

"You will not find precedent in recent history or Catholic social teaching that would justify an aggressive, first-strike attack, even a pre-emptive strike. The stakes are too high," said Therese Lysaught, associate professor of religious studies who specializes in theological ethics.

She singles out the probability of success point. "What would be achieved by removing Saddam Hussein? The situation is too complex for our violent removal of him from power to guarantee an improvement in any set of outcomes. It likely would only further fuel the intense animosity many in Islamic countries feel toward the U.S., regardless of their opinion of Hussein. From a practical perspective, proceeding violently against Iraq against the counsel of its Arab neighbors seems at best imprudent.

"President Bush advertises his religious faith and practice," Lysaught said. "He needs to return to the principles of the just-war tradition and, though Methodist, would do well to heed the counsel of Catholic social teaching."

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